

WE CLAIM:

1. In a computer application program for editing an electronic document comprising one or more markup language tags, a method for editing the electronic document, the method comprising:

associating a placeholder with one or more of the markup language tags;

and

displaying the placeholder for each of the one or more markup language tags that is empty while operating in an editing mode in which the markup language tags are not displayed.

2. The method of Claim 1, wherein the placeholder for each tag comprises the name of the tag.

3. The method of Claim 1, wherein the placeholder for each tag comprises a user-defined text string.

4. The method of Claim 1, wherein the placeholder for each tag comprises either a user-defined text string or the name of the tag if a user-defined text string has not been defined for the tag.

5. The method of Claim 4, further comprising removing the placeholder while operating in an editing mode in which the markup language tags are displayed.

6. The method of Claim 5, further comprising:

receiving a selection of the placeholder for a tag while operating in the editing mode in which the markup language tags are not displayed;

receiving typed data following the selection of the placeholder for the tag; and

in response to receiving the typed data, removing the placeholder for the tag and inserting the typed data within the tag.

7. The method of Claim 6, further comprising:
receiving a selection of the placeholder for a tag while operating in the editing mode in which the markup language tags are not displayed;
receiving a delete request following the selection of the placeholder for the tag; and
in response to receiving the delete request, deleting the tag and the placeholder for the tag from the electronic document.

8. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions stored thereon which, when executed by a computer, cause the computer to perform the method of Claim 1.

9. A computer-controlled apparatus capable of performing the method of Claim 1.

10. In a computer application program for editing an electronic document comprising one or more markup language tags, a method for editing the electronic document, the method comprising:

providing a first editing mode in which the one or more markup language tags are displayed;

providing a second editing mode in which the markup language tags are not displayed;

while operating in the second editing mode, determining whether any of the markup language tags are empty; and

in response to determining that one or more of the tags are empty, displaying a placeholder for each empty tag while operating in the second editing mode.

11. The method of Claim 10, wherein the placeholder comprises text identifying a name associated with the tag for which the placeholder is displayed.

12. The method of Claim 11, further comprising not displaying the placeholders while operating in the first editing mode.

13. The method of Claim 12, further comprising:
receiving a selection of the placeholder for a tag;
receiving typed data following the selection of the placeholder for the tag; and
in response to receiving the typed data, removing the placeholder for the tag and inserting the typed data within the tag.

14. The method of Claim 13, further comprising:
determining whether the typed data has been removed; and
in response to determining that the typed data has been removed, displaying the placeholder for the tag while operating within the second editing mode.

15. The method of Claim 14, further comprising:
receiving a request to associate a user-defined placeholder with a selected tag;
receiving the user-defined placeholder;
associating the user-defined placeholder with the selected tag; and
displaying the user-defined placeholder for the selected tag if the selected tag is empty while operating in the second editing mode.

16. The method of Claim 15, further comprising:
receiving the selection of the placeholder for a tag;
following receipt of the selection of the placeholder, receiving a request to move the tag to a destination location within the electronic document; and
moving the tag and the selected placeholder to the destination location in response to the request.

17. The method of Claim 16, wherein the request to move the tag comprises a drag and drop operation.

18. The method of Claim 17, further comprising:
exposing a property for each tag in the electronic document, wherein the property for each tag may be programmatically set for each tag in the electronic document to assign a placeholder to the tag.

19. The method of Claim 18, further comprising:
exposing a property for the electronic document, wherein the property for the electronic document may be set to cause the placeholders to be displayed when operating in the second editing mode.

20. The method of Claim 11, wherein the text is defined in a XSD schema file.

21. The method of Claim 11, wherein the text is defined in a schema library.

22. The method of Claim 21, wherein the text is defined in a configuration file.

23. A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions stored thereon which, when executed by a computer, cause the computer to perform the method of Claim 10.

24. A computer-controlled apparatus capable of performing the method of Claim 10.